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**STATEMENT  
ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP  
BY**

**AMBASSADOR KINGSLEY MAMABOLO,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
PERMANENT MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**IN THE  
SIXTH COMMITTEE OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 83  
“RULE OF LAW AT THE NATIONAL AND  
INTERNATIONAL LEVELS”**

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*Check against delivery*

## **Mr. Chairman**

Thank you for affording me the floor. My delegation, once again, has the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group. The African Group statement is in line with this year's theme "*Sharing States' national practices in strengthening the rule of law through access to justice*", a topic of great importance to the African States. This theme is in line with the United Nations Principles and Guidelines on Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Systems which reads "*Recalling the Bangkok Declaration on Synergies and Responses: Strategic Alliances in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, especially paragraph 18 thereof, in which Member States are called upon to take steps, in accordance with their domestic laws, to promote access to justice, to consider the provision of legal aid to those who need it and to enable the effective assertion of their rights in the criminal justice system*".

## **Mr Chairman**

The provision of legal aid is a concrete way in which access to justice and the rule of law can be strengthened. Member States must provide legal aid to the poor and vulnerable. Well-functioning justice institutions bound by the rule of law are critical to building peace and consolidating development gains. Development agencies and practitioners have increasingly supported reforms aimed at improving justice institutions and the rule of law at large. Such reform processes can draw on international commitments on promoting and protecting the rule of law while ensuring that they are evidence-based, specific to national and local realities and contexts, and grounded on the lessons from past development experience on strengthening the rule of law and promoting access to justice.

## **Mr Chairman**

Capacity building is key for the promotion of the rule of law at the national level and for strengthening national capacities of Member States, including through enhanced technical assistance. We believe that capacity-building and rule of law activities, should be anchored by two interrelated concepts in determining needs and priorities, namely effectiveness and local or national ownership. Together these principles require partnership and mutual respect between the providers and recipients. It is also necessary to take into account the customs and national political, socioeconomic realities and laws of each recipient state. In this regard, the African Group notes the various activities of the Rule of Law Unit under the guidance of Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group, aimed at bringing about

better coherence, coordination and quality of rule of law capacity-building activities both within the Organization and at country level. Efforts by the Rule of Law Unit to explore initiatives to enable donors, recipients and other entities involved in financing rule of law activities to work in a more collaborative and coordinated manner, must be encouraged.

**Mr Chairman**

Being a strong defender of a balanced approach towards both levels of the rule of law, national and international, the African group supports effective implementation of international obligations on the national level. We call upon states to contribute to ensuring that the rules of various international law instruments adopted by States are effectively implemented in domestic systems according to their national legislation. Finally, the multifaceted application of the *principle*, rule of law, at the international and national levels has led to its consideration in different forums and committees within the UN. We therefore think that the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly is the most suitable place to consider all aspects of rule of law in the future, so as to ensure the coherent and continuous development of this *principle*.

**I thank you for your attention.**